



**Special Points of Interest:**

- 300 more Haitian school children now have clean water to drink.
- Farmers working with FIAI are expanding their gardens to realize increased income.
- Fall Mission Trip: October 14-21, 2011.
- More than 60,000 Haitian living in the Artibonite Valley have been directly or indirectly impacted by FIAI's ministries since 1997.

**Inside This Issue:**

Creating Opportunity... 2

100 Families—Five Villages 2

Happening Now... 2

October Mission Trip 3

Why I Go To Haiti 3

Haiti Through Proverbs 3

Thoughts from Pastor Tom 4

## Water for the School Children *by Tom Braak*

In February when my father, Dr. Larry Braak, visited us at the Faith in Action International mission here in Verrettes, Haiti we got to work quickly at a school in Savonet.

We installed a Sawyer water filter with a larger holding tank in a regional education center. We also gave out filters to families.

The larger holding tank works great because it provides more pressure and therefore a faster flow of water to thirsty school children.

In the picture at right, my father is shown after we installed the first of these new tanks in a local school.



**Over 300 youth now have clean water to drink at their school in Savonet, Haiti. Dr. Larry Braak is shown demonstrating how to use the Sawyer water filter to children.**

Before this installation, kids had to walk 25 minutes to a spring to get clear water. Note: I didn't say "clean," water—only "clear." The spring water only looks "clean."

Parasites that cause the cholera pandemic are still in these outdoor springs, and children would miss 30 minutes of class time walking to a spring.

Now they can draw from the irrigation ditch that runs by the school and filter it. Gallon jugs will be filled throughout the day and kept on hand for the kids.

## Haiti Through Proverbs *by Dr. Larry Braak*

Haitian poets have long described truths and life in Haiti through proverbs. My heart has been touched by these sayings.

"Lespwa fé viv" means "hope makes us live." I saw this clearly demonstrated when I joined the FIAI team teaching mountain villagers about how to use water filtration kits. The villagers had been told in advance to send one delegate to represent 5 to 6

neighborhood families. When we arrived at the classrooms, there were many more. They all wanted to learn about and use the filters to prevent needless deaths from cholera. They showed a high level of hope because of the realistic expectation their children would live through this deadly epidemic due to the proper use of water filters.



**L to R: Larry and Tom Braak with Jean Rony teaching Haitians how to use water filters.**

**Haitian Proverb: "Lespwa fé viv"—is motto for daily living—"Hope makes us live."**



In times of disaster, FIAI distributes food to poverty-stricken people who live in the Artibonite Valley.

**Good, generous people! Our recent plea for 'truck funds' to buy a 'new' (used) truck brought an overwhelming response. We have paid for the truck, have funds to upgrade it for rugged use in Haiti, and have enough to ship it to St. Marc near Verrettes. Thank You!**

## Creating Opportunity in Rural Areas *by Dr. Bill Cansfield*

Last month, a friend who traveled to Haiti with FIAI several years ago gave me a magazine, PE: The Magazine for Professional Engineers. He is an engineer; I am not.

In this magazine was an article titled "Reusing Haiti to Rebuild It." The article was good, and it spoke to turning the rubble in Port au Prince (PAP) into building material, but as often is the case it seems, it equated the rebuilding of Port au Prince with the rebuilding of the entire country. **Yes, the news media seem to dwell on PAP, but the rebuilding of that capital city, while certainly crucial, will not rebuild Haiti.**

For decades prior to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, thousands of people and families from the rural areas of the country moved to Port au Prince because of lack of opportunity (economy) in rural Haiti.

Prior to the earthquake, the population of PAP was estimated at 2.2 million people-many more than that city could reasonably accommodate.

If PAP again attracts millions of people, disaster-maybe of a different sort-could happen again.

Rebuilding Haiti really depends on creating opportunity-an economy-in the rural areas of the country, not necessarily in the big city.

Agriculture is crucial.

**Before the earthquake, Haiti had to import 50% of its food.**

FIAI's work in agriculture, education, clean water, and Christian ministry is creating an improved economy among the people of the Artibonite Valley.

We estimate more than 60,000 people of the Artibonite Valley have been directly or indirectly impacted by our work.

**Our continued and expanded mission depends on your support.**

## 100 Families - Five Villages *by Tom Braak*

Rather, we are setting examples with about 100 families in five villages. Now that we have a new (used) truck, we will expand our reach next year. This is, in some ways, a new project for us as in the past the soil conservation and tree projects were separate and the trees were only given to the people at large gatherings without us going into their individual gardens.

Now, the farmer must have the holes dug and fencing in place to protect from goats before we will give them the trees.

We will also have regular follow up visits to ensure the farmers are taking care of the trees properly. We could easily expand to over 1,000 families next year and to 5,000 families in 2013.

We will also be giving out trees to the general population as we have done in the past. Then we will go back to count how many trees each farmer is producing. We anticipate giving out over 10,000 fruit trees this spring.



Oleus, manager of our fruit tree nursery, transplants the first plant of the season in the garden mentioned in the article to the right.

## Teaching Soil Conservation Pays Off *by Tom Braak*

Recently, we went up the mountain to teach a community soil conservation within the garden.

One farmer, only one week after we offered trees, was the first to take action in his community. He fenced in a small garden about 25 x 60 feet, right next to his home, and the community all worked together on building two terraces using rocks.

This garden of millet typically produces about \$15 (US) annually for the landowner. However, we will provide him with eight fruit trees in early June and 30-40 papaya trees for the nursery we started with them last year. Plus, he will plant about 30 Habanero Pepper plants, each bringing in about \$17 for a total of \$510 in 2012.

By November, the Papaya will start producing, and he should see a return of around \$13 per Papaya tree each year beginning in 2012 for a total of \$390. The papaya and hot peppers should bring in over \$900!

In four years, he will thin out the Papaya to make room for the growing fruit trees. He plans to expand his garden next year. We are thrilled to see such great progress.

## A Day in the Life of a Haiti Adventure *By: Jack Befus, Mission Trip Participant March-April, 2011*

We are realizing that life here in Haiti does not run on our well-oiled and maintained schedules like it does in the States. Time after time our own notions of what is going to happen are shredded by the harsh realities of life in a country where the things we take for granted do not exist—electricity, clean drinking water, or a reliable mechanic.

We abandoned our watches on the flight into Port au Prince, (PAP), and the withdrawal from life on the clock took a few days. After a time, we began to enjoy the freedom of the relatively unscheduled life. I say “unscheduled” from man’s perspective, but not from God’s.

“When will the truck be fixed?” was a frequently asked question during our stay in Verrettes.

The usual reply—“I have no idea”!

The clutch had failed during the trip up into the mountains to work on soil conservation in a garden belonging to one elderly woman filling hillside trenches with thousands of stones from around the area. We had organized a long “chain gang” of locals and Americans to fairly quickly accomplish a great deal of work. It had been exhausting but very rewarding. The result of these projects is greatly enhanced crop production.

On the following day, Tom had asked if we were bored, as we sat around the guest house waiting for the truck to be repaired. The day was very hot for us—we had left Michigan on a 20-degree morning and landed in PAP to 95 degrees with humidity. We were grateful for the break as Tom can be a daunting task master!

“NO,” we all replied, “We are not bored—We are in recovery.”

Later, a cell phone call awakened Tom from an afternoon nap. It was one of Faith in Action International’s workers who was working up in the mountains that day.

“I can’t do anything about that right now because the truck is in the shop. Let me call Jean Rony (FIAI staffer) and find out where it is. I’ll call you right back.”

Tom checked, and to all of our amazement, the truck was out of the shop and on the way home. Tom called “Anyel” back and said we would get there as quickly as possible.

Tom told us that a pregnant mother who lives in one of the mountain communities had gone into labor, and things were not progressing. It appeared the baby was breach, and they had no way to get her down to a hospital. These villagers live in very simple one-and two-room huts in severe poverty. There is no regular transportation in and out of these parts. Because Tom could commit the truck, they would start bringing her down.

Tom quickly organized the crew that would make the trip, and we pulled together a few supplies we thought might be useful. As we looked at each other weighing the possible outcomes of this trip, Tom stated flatly, “You need to consider that she could die on the way.”

Shortly after Jean Rony arrived with the truck, we

loaded up and headed out. Tom had made a

few calls to request prayer, and our team prayed in the truck as we made our way out of the compound. Jean Rony was our driver, and we made good time driving through town and onto the mountain road.

The old Mitsubishi four-wheel drive pickup is an amazing truck, but it has had a lot of abuse. The terrain in these hills would make for a wonderful torture test for off-road vehicles. Rocky, at times very steep in grade, filled with ravines and holes of every dimension—the suspensions and transmissions take extraordinary punishment every day.

As we made our way slowly up the mountain towards the family out on the road, the clutch began to fail once again. When we arrived at the home of one of the project people involved in the rescue, we decided to stop and wait for the party. The risk of getting stuck higher up was too great. And so we waited.



**Impromptu fun! At the invitation of the children, Jack Befus tries tree swinging on a broken branch.**

### **What Should I Expect On a FIAI Mission Trip?**

- **Expect to be amazed by the resiliency of the people.**
- **Expect to be surrounded by children most of the day.**
- **Expect that you will be working alongside Haitian people.**
- **Expect that this may be a life-changing experience.**

### **What Should I Not Expect on a FIAI Mission Trip?**

- **Do not expect luxury food, accommodations or transportation.**
- **Don’t expect that everything will work out exactly as planned.**
- **Don’t expect to work hard every day. There will be lots of time to relax, rest, and journal if you are so inclined.**

**We are so thankful for our donors and supporters, especially for the much needed truck most recently, and want to thank you personally; will you please join us this summer on August 26, 2011 in beautiful Grand Haven, Michigan**

## A Day in the Life...cont'd. *by Jack Befus, Mission Trip Participant March-April, 2011*



Haitian villager, Obenes, joins mission trip participant Jack Befus in the mountains above the Artibonite Valley of Haiti



Nancy Voss relaxes at the Indigo Club before traveling to Port Au Prince to fly home.

It was a very hot day—likely in the mid-to-upper '90s, high humidity and there were few clouds to provide any relief from the sun. After about 45 minutes, we could see the family off in the distance, walking slowly down the switchback road. We turned the truck around and waited.

The party arrived—the mother, clearly in much distress, was holding her pregnant belly and sweating profusely. The others, three in all, were helping her as they walked. We helped her onto the foam mattresses lying lengthwise in the bed of the truck, and gave her water. The others—a few family members and a couple from our team—positioned themselves around her to stabilize her and provide what they could. We gave her a few Cliff Bars from our packs and refilled her water bottle.

The trip down the mountain was uneventful, and in about 90 minutes we were at the clinic in Verrettes. We all watched with a great sense of pride as she was safely carried in. As we drove back to the compound, we were all so grateful for God's protection of us all, as we watched His schedule for this day unfold, and talked about the privilege of participating in this little miracle.

We later learned that the mother was transferred to Albert Schweitzer Hospital and the baby was delivered safely by caesarian section.

The week with Faith in Action International in Haiti was full of other surprises and great fulfillment. The people are so beautiful and deserve our support to help them make their country into all the Lord intends it to be.

The mother is Dwela Kimea and the baby is Lovena Fusniel.

### MISSION TRIP REFLECTION

**“Know that we are both changed forever from the time that you led us through. We find that tears come often when our thoughts turn to Haiti and the people that God put in front of us through the week. And we find that we have let our hearts be broken by the needs—and inspired by the amazing resilience—and beauty of the people. There is no way we will be able to thank you for being there, for helping us experience these changes. Look forward to communicating more.”**

**-Jack Befus**

## Sign Up For October Mission Trip *by Dr. Bill Cansfield, FIAI Board, President*

October is a good month for mission trips to Haiti. The rainy season is over, it is a little cooler and less humid.

As one can guess, there is much work to be done with our mission in Haiti. **Faith in Action International is planning a Fall 2011 mission trip beginning the second week in October.**

Most trips are six-to-ten days in length. We are seeking a church to help provide trip volunteers (but not pay for) this October trip.

Those who go on our mission trips to Verrettes, Haiti can expect to:

- Build a rainwater reservoir at a church;
- Participate in construction projects;
- Work in tree nurseries;
- Help with soil conservation;
- Construct an Office and FIAI outbuildings;
- Make Guest House updates;
- Visit schools and locations of interest;
- Repair the Faith in Action International Office and/or our rented home



Dr. Larry Braak is pictured above talking to a blind villager from the Artibonite Valley. Mission trips are a great way to understand the struggles the Haitian people face.



# Why Mission Trips Are Important by Pastor Tom Cook, First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven, Michigan

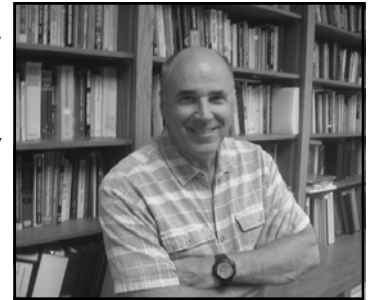
I believe mission trips are important opportunities for faith formation. I also believe that anyone who goes on one with an open mind and heart will be awakened to a new understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what his purpose is for us as citizens in his Kingdom. As a church that claims to be *“called to celebrate God’s grace as a Christ-centered community of acceptance, growing in faith and living as Christ’s hands to serve”* ... mission trips like these hit every aspect of our vision statement.

First, such mission trips are always worshipful. For those who travel to different cultures, worship will not be like that which we’ve grown used to in our congregation. I can tell you it will be experienced deeply and profoundly. I have discovered this in my worship experience I have engaged in on a mission trip and was totally blown away by such experiences in Haiti and, in my former church, in South Africa.

Sometimes, the only hope the poor have comes from their heartfelt prayers, their singing, dancing and worship celebrations.

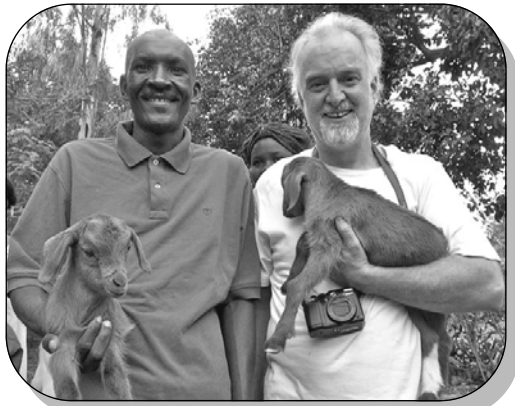
Second, these kind of mission trips open the mind to becoming a more accepting follower of Christ as they immerse participants in a culture that is entirely different from ours. You may experience for the first time what it feels like to be a minority. You will experience a culture whose rhythm and pace is in many ways determined by the desperate poverty in which its people must survive, especially when compared to our affluent and abundant lifestyle.

I guarantee you will learn and grow in your faith in ways that you never imagined. Mission trips expand the mind and deepen faith. It is my sincere hope that you will consider mission travel.



Pastor Tom Cook in the church library

**To Register for an Upcoming Mission Trip or for more information, please contact Tammy Davison at Faith in Action International 616/842-8951 or E-mail: [Tammy@faithinactionint.org](mailto:Tammy@faithinactionint.org)**



Tom Braak is shown with one of the local villagers from Jaavier, Haiti. His female goat bread with the buck oat FIAI provided, producing the two offspring (kids) pictured above. FIAI provides adult bucks, ready for breeding. The cost per buck to benefit one community is now \$125.

This is just one way Haitian families are sustained-now and in the futures.

Faith in Action International (FIAI) is a non-denominational, non-profit organization formed for charitable purposes as defined within Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

FIAI began in 1997—and over the past 13 years Tom Braak has taught soil conservation, animal husbandry, and reforestation so that Haitian villagers can create a more sustainable living environment for themselves, and thus greater incomes in pursuit of an overall better quality of life.

Tom has led efforts toward ground water restoration by helping villagers work the soil and stop deforesting the mountains, plus he has introduced water purification systems to villagers to help stem cholera and other pandemic diseases. Most notably over the past six months, Tom has helped bring youth and adult ministry to the region through pastoral training. FIAI has been incorporating ministry into all it has done for many years. It is the philosophy of FIAI to help the people of Haiti help themselves.

## An organization you can trust...

Each year our organization is reviewed by a certified public accountant. Those reviews are available at our website: [www.FaithInActionInt.org](http://www.FaithInActionInt.org). We believe it is important that you know how your donations are used. We provide as much information as possible in our newsletter and our website; however, if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We appreciate your comments too.

**To make a donation, please make your check payable to: Faith in Action International, P.O. Box 171, Spring Lake, MI 49456 or to make a donation online, please visit our secure website at [www.faithinactionint.org](http://www.faithinactionint.org)**

Faith in Action International  
P.O. Box 171  
Spring Lake, MI 49456

If you wish to be removed from our mailing, or if you are reading someone else's copy and would like to receive your own, please contact Tammy at 616-842-8951 or email [tammy@faithinactionint.org](mailto:tammy@faithinactionint.org)

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
GRAND HAVEN, MI  
PERMIT No. 52

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# Please Save The Date

**Please Join Tom Braak, Executive Director of Faith in Action International, and his family this summer in beautiful Grand Haven, Michigan for a Haiti Friends Event.**

**Friday Evening, August 26, 2011**

**Haitian Food Samplings  
Photo Exhibit  
Update on what's going on in Haiti**



**Check us out on Facebook - you do not need to be a member  
On the web, search "Facebook Faith in Action International"**